

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05  
IO-13 DHA-02 /076 W

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R 141230Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2507  
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8653

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, EC  
SUBJECT: CRITICISM OF GOE'S POLITICAL POSTURE GROWS

REF: QUITO 8556

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL ANGER AMONG POLITICIANS OVER RECENT  
HEAVY-HANDED POLITICAL MOVES AND POLICY STATEMENTS BY GOE  
WAS CAPPED OFF BY LIBERAL PARTY DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS  
SUPPORT OF GOE'S TRANSITION SCENARIO. END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE EDITORIAL OPINION HAS GENERALLY SUPPORTED REMARKS  
MADE DECEMBER 7 BY MINGOV CO. BOLIVAR JARRIN EXPLAINING GOE  
ARRESTS OF POLITICIANS, POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE CONSISTENTLY  
CONDEMNED BOTH THE ARRESTS AND JARRIN'S RATIONALE.  
JARRIN, IN HIS SPEECH (SEE REFTEL) EXPLAINED THAT RECENT  
ARRESTEES WERE GUILTY OF SUBVERSION AND CONSPIRACY AGAINST  
THE STATE, AND DEFINED THE LIMITS OF ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL  
ACTIVITY, AND INDICATED THAT THE TRANSITION PROCESS WAS  
TIED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF POLITICAL PEACE AND QUIET.

3. NUMBERED AMONG THOSE POLITICAL PARTIES THAT HAVE  
CRITICIZED JARRIN'S STATEMENTS AND THE GOE ARRESTS ARE THE  
CONSERVATIVES (TRUJILLO BRANCH), THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS,  
THE LIBERALS, THE NATIONAL PONCISTA FRONT, AND THE PARTIDO  
NACIONAL REVOLUCIONARIO OF FORMER PRESIDENT CARLOS JULIO  
AROSEMENA. ACCORDING TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT REPORTED TODAY,  
DEC. 13, THE LIBERALS ARE WITHDRAWING FROM PARTICIPATION  
IN THE GOE PLAN TO RETURN ECUADOR TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE  
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BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT IS RESTRICTING LEGITIMATE POLITICAL

ACTIVITY. IN A CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF DEC. 9, PABLO DAVALOS, LEADER OF THE NATIONAL PONCISTA FRONT, SAID THAT THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY WILL ALSO WITHDRAW FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE GOE PLAN IF THE CURRENT POLITICAL ARRESTEES ARE NOT RELEASED.

4. JUNTA CHAIRMAN ADMIRAL POVEDA TOLD AMBASSADOR DEC. 9 THAT HE WAS PREPARING TO SEE THE NEXT DAY SEVERAL POLITICAL GROUPS WHO WERE EXERCISED OVER JARRIN'S DEEDS AND REMARKS. HE SAID THAT HE PLANNED TO TELL THE POLITICIANS THAT JARRIN'S CONDITIONING OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS DID NOT REPRESENT TRUE GOVERNMENT POLICY AND WOULD REFER BACK TO ONE OF HIS OWN RECENT SPEECHES WHICH HAD A MORE LIBERAL TONE. IN VIEW OF WHAT HAS COME AFTER THAT DATE, APPARENTLY POVEDA'S DISCLAIMERS WERE NOT CONVINCING ENOUGH FOR THE POLITICOS.

5. COMMENT: THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE LIBERALS FROM THE GOE PLAN FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE WILL HAVE A NAGATIVE IMPACT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO CARRY THAT PLAN THROUGH, PARTICULARLY IF THE PARTY'S EXAMPLE IS FOLLOWED BY OTHERS. BROAD PARTICIPATION BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES HAS TENDED TO LEGITIMIZE THE GOE PLAN, SOMETHING BADLY NEEDED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE CURRENT OPPOSITION AND REACTION TO THE RECENT POLITICAL MOVES OF THE GOE, COMBINED WITH INCREASINGLY PERSISTENT COUP RUMORS, SUGGESTS THAT THE CHANCES OF THIS PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT'S SURVIVING AND RETURNING POWER TO A CONSTITUTIONAL REGIME AS SCHEDULED IN JANUARY 1978 MAY HAVE DECREASED IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS.

6. THE GOE COULD PROBABLY RECOUP QUICKLY MUCH OF THE GROUND LOST WITH THE POLITICIANS BY THE SIMPLE EXPEDIENT OF REPLACING JARRIN IN THE CABINET RESHUFFLE WHICH HAS BEEN PREDICTED IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. HOWEVER, JARRIN IS CONSIDERED CLOSE TO TRIUMVIR GENERAL DURAN, AND ASIDE FROM THAT, FEW IN THE MILITARY APPEAR TO OPPOSE HIS PERFORMANCE. IN FACT, EVEN THOSE CONSIDERED POLITICAL MODERATES IN THE MILITARY HAVE VEHEMENTLY DEFENDED IN PRIVATE THE DECISION TO JAIL THE SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES.

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## Message Attributes

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